



Type T Patch Code (New Document)

For use with Documents with Protective Markings up to and including  
[REDACTED]

**Document UIN**

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**PM**

**Caveat**

0 0

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NOTE: [REDACTED]  
and other Caveats are  
NOT PERMITTED.  
Give document special handling.

**Prepared By**

**Number of Sheets**

4

5

Note: See coding sheet for Protective Marking (PM), Caveat and Prepared By codes.

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[REDACTED]

RC 76.  
13/10/84.  
984

1, [REDACTED] OF LAKE WEYBA DRIVE, NOOSAVILLE, 4566 (TELEPHONE  
(071) 498 8329 STATE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. I was born on the [REDACTED] and joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1949. I retired in 1961 as a Warrant Officer Signaller.
2. In 1953, I was based at 2 Squadron Amberley flying Lincoln Bombers.
3. In about the early part of October 1953, I became aware that myself and my crew would be involved in tracking missions as part of the British atomic bomb testing programme being carried out in South Australia.
4. I was the second signaller on the crew and myself and [REDACTED], the gunner, were detailed to operate a radiation monitoring device which was installed in the aircraft a few days before the missions began.
5. I don't know who installed it but several days before the mission was due to begin, we were visited by a British civilian person whom I believed to be a scientist. He gave [REDACTED] and myself instructions on how to operate the device. His instructions were basically a matter of showing us how to switch it on and off and how to change the scales to higher or lower settings in order to keep the radiation levels within the scale. The device operated by giving a visual readout of the radiation levels by means of a dial.
6. We were supplied with log sheets and instructed to take readings at certain intervals once we had encountered the cloud and to enter them into the sheets. They were then supposed to be communicated over the intercom to [REDACTED] who was the first signaller who would obtain our location from the navigator and then encode both sets of information and transmit them to base.
7. The British scientist who briefed us on the operation of the device did not tell us anything about radiation or its dangers. It was simply a mechanical lesson on how to operate the machine but he did indicate that the levels of radiation we expected to encounter would be handled alright by the machine.
8. It was never suggested at any time that we would be able to visually identify the cloud and we were under the impression that the only way we knew we would be in it, would be from the monitoring device.

9. My log book shows that on the 16th October, 1954, I flew a sampling mission of two hours night flying until dawn and then a further 10 hours. As I recall, we simply took off from Amberley and flew a designated course up into western Queensland. The idea was that we would watch the device and when we intercepted the cloud we would then attempt to determine its size, shape, location, strength and direction and speed of drift.
10. I believe that other aircraft took off on different courses but I don't know exactly what the results of their flights were.
11. As I recall, we obtained no readings for a couple of hours. I can't recall what ~~the~~ altitude we were at but I seem to remember it may have been 16,000 feet. I would have been on oxygen from time to time while at that altitude, I wouldn't have been too concerned about it.
12. Suddenly while <sup>was</sup> watching the needle swung right over and went off the scale. I tried to reset it to the maximum reading but it didn't move down again. I tried a few other things to get it reading again and then reported to the skipper, [REDACTED] that the machine had gone unserviceable. He instructed myself and [REDACTED] to keep trying to get it operational again which we did without success. After a few minutes, the needle suddenly dropped down on the scale so that we were getting a reading and we reported that it was now serviceable. We continued to fly and after a few more minutes, the needle went right over off the dial again even on the maximum reading and we reported it as unserviceable again.
13. It was at that point that some member of the crew noticed that we were flying through a reddy-brown haze and we realised that we were in the fallout cloud and that, in fact, the machine was operational.
14. I believe that [REDACTED] then encoded the data and transmitted to base. I believe there was an exchange of messages between him and base during which they asked him to check his encoding and he verified it. They then asked him to come and check the instrument himself because the readings were much higher than they should have been. He did this and confirmed the readings to base.

15. For about the next four hours, we continued to fly in and out of the cloud. After the first few passes, the machine became ineffective because it seemed to be unable to differentiate between the radiation in the aircraft and the radiation outside. On the first few passes, it had not been entirely effective as the aircraft had obviously picked up some radiation but at least we were able to see when the needle fell. After a few passes, it became useless and we carried out our mission by examining the cloud visually.
16. I estimate that we were in and around the cloud for about four hours before turning for home. We found the cloud to be donut shaped with there being less radiation in the centre than in the ring around the outside.
17. We were supposed to fly back to Richmond for debriefing but on the way ran low on fuel and had to divert to Williamstown near Sydney. We landed with very little fuel left in our tanks.
18. After landing, we taxied to a remote part of the airstrip and we<sup>were</sup> instructed to remain<sup>in</sup> the aircraft. Guards where then posted around the aircraft to stop unauthorised access to it. We were instructed to remain in the aircraft until a Dakota from Richmond arrived to take us and the collection filters back. These filters had been attached one under each wing at Amberley and can simply be removed in a few minutes by a mechanic.
19. After an hour or two, the Dakota from Richmond arrived and took us and the filters back. I can't recall exactly who removed the filters but I know that it was not done by any ground crew because nobody was allowed near the aircraft. I'm sure they were removed by one of the aircrew since it was only a simple operation.
20. When we arrived back at Richmond, the skipper and navigator went for debriefing and myself and [REDACTED] went to our barracks. Shortly afterwards while in the sergeants' mess, I received a phone call from [REDACTED] who informed us that we were probably radioactive and that we should make sure we showered for an hour. I did this although I didn't have any clean clothing to change into since we had not been expecting to overnight a way from Amberley. Therefore, after showering for an hour, I had to climb back into the dirty clothing I had been wearing all day.

21. The next day, the entire crew returned in the Dakota to Williamtown to pick up the Lincoln. We brought with us, as a guest, a member of the flight crew from one of the American B52s which were based temporarily at Richmond. He carried a portable geiger counter and seemed to be trained in its use. He climbed all over and around the aircraft measuring the radioactivity and said that it was very radioactive and declined our offer to give him a ride back to Richmond. He said he would go by train but I don't actually know how he got back there.
22. After arrival back at Richmond the aircraft was quarantined out of the road of the other aircraft and guards were placed on it again. I don't think any decontamination of the aircraft was done at Richmond and after a few days we all returned to Amberley.
23. On arrival back at Amberley, the aircraft was again quarantined near 3AD and I recall that within a couple of weeks of its return, I noticed it had been washed down by some ground crew. I gathered this was in an attempt to decontaminate it but I don't how successful that was.
24. At no stage we were given any protection whatsoever, nor we were warned of the dangers of radiation which we might encounter. I was never checked personally for radiation nor was I decontaminated apart from the long shower at Richmond. On arrival back at Amberley, I simply laundered my flying gear in the usual way and continued wearing the same flying suit for several years.
25. Several weeks after arriving back at Amberley, I was ordered to go to a blood test at Ipswich Hospital to see if the radiation had affected my blood in any way but I understood the results were negative and I was never tested again in any way apart from my routine RAAF medical checkups.
26. I have had three skin cancers removed which seems strange to me since I only came to Australia from England when I was 25 years old and skin cancer is very rare in that country. I also have cataracts on both eyes although these have not required surgery yet.

